Auburn Theo' Sem. March 22, 1830

To the "Brethren" in Princeton Theo' Sem.

Dear Brethren,

Your letter requesting a correspondence with us was recd in due time, & we cheerfully acquiesce in your proposal.

We estimate the cause of Missions as you do. We believe that the work of the minister is the work of Missions — that his commission to preach the Gospel is the commission of a Missionary. The Apostles went forth under the authority of Xts last message "Go ye into all the World" &c & under no other authority do ministers preach at the present day. Acting under this commission much is left to our discretion, but woe to the chh. when the ministry become so discretionary as to annihilate the spirit of the command. Undoubtedly an eye ought constantly to be had to the wide field of effort which our own country presents. The facilities of doing good which the South & the West afford ought not to be overlooked. This field which is ripe for the harvest — or rather, as appears from the prevalence of Romanism & infidelity, ripe for destruction demands present, decided & vigorous effort. But still if we confine the sympathies of the chh & restrict the efforts of the ministry to our own country we fall under the chilling blast of extended selfishness. That minister who acts & instructs his people to act in the cause of benevolence within restricted limits, palsies the efforts of the chh. & understands not the spirit of his commission. Benevolence in its very nature is diffusive & the farther & wider it is spread abroad the more it will increase & strengthen. Restrict it to prescribed limits & its powers are destroyed. When human probabilities therefore are so much relied upon as to disparage the spirit of our commission, which is diffusive, we dry up the sympathies of the chh & paralyze the arm of benevolent effort.

The "Brethren" in whose behalf I write consist of 4 Brs R. Tinker, N. Harrington, S. Johnson & myself. — "Brethren" we wish to know your names. When you write to us, which I hope will be much sooner than we have answered your letter, give us your names. Have not the friends of Zion reason to be distressed that so few are ready to consecrate themselves to the work of Missions. Have they not cause even to fear that the spirit of Apostles is lost. Surely the exegencies of the times call for more entire self-consecration to the service of God.

We have no Society of Inquiry for those who are deliberating respecting their personal duty in reference to Missions; &

on account of our present peculiar circumstances we do not think it advisable to form such a Society.

We have but little hope of increase in the number of the "Brethren". The tide of benevolent feeling & enterprize in the Sem'y flows toward the West & South. And we are happy to inform you that the more the duty of Foreign Missions is urged among us, the greater readiness is found to go to the most remote of our new settlements. Seven of the present Senior Class expect to go next Sep'r to the State of Missouri under the commission of the Comm. H. M. Soc'y. Here is a practical demonstration that the spirit of Foreign Missions is the spirit of benevolent activity & enterprize at home, & that to inculcate the former is the most effectual way of increasing the latter. Instead of f ing then that the cause of benevolence or the cause of Chris at home will suffer by the efforts of the chh abroad, the reverse of this is most seriously to be feared. —

But most of all "Brethren" let us remember that it is not by might nor by strength but by the Spirit of the Lord that the cause of Missions must be advanced. A deep conviction of entire dependence upon God in carrying forward this glorious work is of primary importance — it is indispensable to success. When Christians & ministers & missionaries learn to fight the battles of the Lord in his strength then will they prevail & not till then. If we feel that our own strength is weakness then when we come to place our foot on heathen ground God will be with us & be our strength. Dear Brethren if we go forth as missionaries of the cross may the Lord grant that we may not disappoint the expectations of the chh & bring injury upon the "Dear Cause"

In behalf of the "Brethren" yours affectionately

Sheldon Dibble

Sheldon Dibble
Auburn March 22
1830
First Letter from Auburn
Names &c

To be sent to the
Princeton Theo.
Librarian P T Seminary
from [illegible]
[illegible]

AUBURN N.Y. MAR 24

Mr Samuel Hutchings Jr
Princeton
Theo. Semin'y
New Jersey

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letter